A PETITION

For the Vindication of the Publique use of the Book of

COMMON-PRAYER,

From some foul, but undeserved aspersions lately cast upon it. And for the asserting of the Publique use of *Set-Forms* of *PRAYER*, and dispensing the holy *SACRAMENTS*.

Occasioned by the late Ordinance for the ejecting of scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient Ministers and School-Masters.

As also thirty seven Quæres concerning the said Ordinance, and the particulars thereof.

SEMINARY.

Humbly presented to the most Honourable and Highest Court of PARLIAMENT, *now convened at* Westminster, *Anno* 1654.

WITH

A true Account rendred in an *Epistle* prefixed, and an *Appendix* subjoyned, both of the Printing and Presenting the same.

By Lionel Gatford, *Batchelour in Divinity.*

2 Chron. 13. v. 9. Deut. 33. v. 8. 10, 11.

London, Printed for *John Williams*, at the *Crown* in Saint *Pauls* Church-yard, 1654.

TO

THE MOST HONOURABLE and Higheſt Court of PARLIAMENT, now aſſembled at *Weſtminſter*,

Lionel Gatford, Batchelour in Divinity, wiſheth all Wiſdome, Courage, and Fear of the Lord, with all other graces neceſſary for this life, and all comforts and joyes reſerved for a better.

Moſt Honourable, and truly honoured,

BE pleaſed (I moſt humbly beſeech you) to receive by the hands of another, what my preſent infirmities of body, and poverty of condition, will not permit me to preſent unto your Honours by mine own. The following Petition, and certain Quæres annexed thereto; both occaſioned by the late Ordinance for the ejecting of ſcandalous, ignorant, and inſufficient Miniſters and School-maſters. An Ordinance deſerving your ſtricteſt examination, as being ſuggeſted to his Highneſſe by ſome grand, but cloſe underminers of the Proteſtant Religion, for the utter extirpation of the Miniſtery thereof out of this Nation, and

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therefore already taken (as I am informed) into your most pious consideration, as a work most beseeming you and your known zeal and affection to the said Religion. And if the said Petition, and Quæres may contribute ought, though never so little, to that great and glorious work, I shall give God all the glory of it; as I shall never cease to supplicate him for his assisting you therein, and crowning your endeavours with an happy and honourable successe. I have caused both the Petition and Quæres to be Printed, and taken the best order I could, at this distance with the Stationer, to whose care I committed the Printing of them, that your Honours might have each of you a perfect Copy, to the intent that you might by your selves in your retirements, as well as joyntly in your Assembly (if you see cause) peruse and scan every part and clause thereof. And if after such a perusal, your Honours shall finde (as I trust you will) nothing therein either repugnant or prejudicial to truth, and the zealous and prudential propugning thereof, or unbeseeming the propugner, or unworthy of your Honours appearing for; I humbly begge your further recommending them (if you shall think fit) to a more publique view, either of his Highnesse or any

any other, with what advantage your better Judgements, and more inflamed zeal to Gods glory, and the true Reformed Religion ſhall prompt you to. But if they obtain no other favor but the being read by you, I ſhall repute it no ſmall recompence, as well as honour to have ſuch witneſſes of my being really ſtudious, and cordially deſirous to defend and maintain, to the utmoſt of my weak power and ability, the ſaid true Reformed Proteſtant Religion eſtabliſhed in the Church of England, *againſt all the enemies and oppugners thereof; as alſo againſt whatſoever ſcandalls, reproaches, or aſperſions they can caſt on it. And that as readily and willingly now in theſe times of frenzy and madneſſe on the one hand, as heretofore in thoſe of imprudence and incogitancy on the other. And perhaps the known adverſaries of our Religion (whoſe heads have been and ſtill are very buſie in all the deſigns and contrivances againſt it, though they have and doe make uſe of others hands to act by) may loſe a great part of their preſent deſigne, if they be not wholly fruſtrated, by this ſingle appearance of one poor ſtripling of the Church of* England; *it being known to them and to the world, that (notwithſtanding the fall*

of

of so many thousand able and eminent professors and repugners of the same Religion, by their Jesuitical treacheries and conspiracies) there are yet whole Armies left of the same faith and courage, though they have not so publiquely declared themselves, nor indeed might without incurring some censure, which they are desirous to avoid. Howsoever, if that stripling be but encouraged with your approbation (as he hath reason from former mercies and deliverances to hope for Gods assistance) he shall willingly hazard himself in the defence of his Religion; and, upon reasonable warning, will be ready with his Shepherds Scrip, and Pastoral Instruments, (though he be sequestred from his flock) to encounter with any Philistine, to whom your Honours shall send or call forth.

Your most devoted servant

TO THE
MOST HONOURABLE
and Higheſt Court of
PARLIAMENT,

Now Convened at *Weſtminſter*, for *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*,

The Humble Petition of Lionel Gatford, *B.D.*

Moſt humbly ſheweth,

THat whereas it pleaſed his Highneſs, the Lord Protector, (upon the ſubtil and malicious ſuggeſtions of cloſe, pernicious enemies to the true Reformed Proteſtant Religion, as your Petitioner in honour of his Highneſſe and Councel is bound to conceive) by his Letters to the Judge of the Aſſiſes the laſt *Spring*, to require the Juſtices of Peace to be more particularly carefull of the ſuppreſſing of Ale-houſes and the Book of *Common-Prayer*;

And

And again since that, by an Ordinance intituled, *An Ordinance for the ejecting of Scandalous, Ignorant, and insufficient Ministers, &c.* conjoin the publique and frequent reading or using the said Book, with the horrid crimes of holding or maintaining blasphemous and Atheistical opinions, of being guilty of Cursing, Swearing, Perjury, subornation of Perjury, Adultery, Fornication, Drunkennesse, and other abominable crimes mentioned in the said Ordinance; As also thereby to adjudge the so reading the said Book to be a crime so scandalous, as that he, that should be guilty thereof, (how thoroughly Orthodox or faithfully laborious, how devoutly pious, and eminently religious soever he otherwise be) should be ejected and displaced from his Cure of Souls, Benefice, or other place or charge, to his own and poor wife and childrens ruine, if not to the extreme dammage or hazzard of those Souls committed to his Charge, and acknowledged to have been much benefited by his Ministery.

Your humble Petioner, in his zeal to Gods glory, and the honour of the true Reformed Protestant

teſtant Religion (of both which, the ſaid Book hath been inſtrumentally none of the leaſt promoter and advancer) may humbly craveth leave to offer theſe few particulars to your moſt ſerious and pious conſideration.

Firſt, Whether the joining of the Book of *Common-Prayer*, and Ale-houſes in their ſuppreſſing, and the reputing and accounting the publique reading or uſing it amongſt ſuch horrid crimes before mentioned, and the adjudging him that ſo readeth or uſeth it, to be therefore ſo ſcandalous, as to deſerve to be ejected out of his Cure or Charge, be not (to ſay the leaſt of it) very injurious and prejudicial to the true Reformed Proteſtant Religion it ſelf, and highly diſhonorable both to it and to the true Profeſſors thereof, as alſo much advantagious to the enemies of both, as well in their now more then ordinarily endeavoured, and more then wontedly prevailing ſeducements and temptations, for the perverting and corrupting many weak brethren, as otherwiſe, when it cannot be denyed, but that the ſaid Book was at firſt compoſed by moſt pious, and religious, as well as Learned and Orthodox

men, eminent for their wisdome and prudence in assisting the Reformation of Religion, renowned for their fidelity and constancy in sealing their profession with their bloud: And hath been since revised, and farther approved and established by all our pious Protestant Princes, with the advice and consent of their most Judicious and Religious Parliaments; And contains in it the form and matter of the publique worship of God by Prayer, and the form and manner of the publique dispensing the holy Sacraments, and other necessary publique observances, constantly practised and observed by the Protestants here in *England*, ever since the Reformation, and no ways repugnant in any essential part thereof to the publique form of Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, used in other Reformed Churches: So that, if that way and manner of the publique worship of God by Prayer, and of the publique dispensing or administring the Sacraments, which hath bin the only constant and approved way here in the Church of *England*, be such as deserves not onely utterly to be abolished and suppressed

preſſed, but to be joined in the aboliſhing and ſuppreſſing it, with thoſe ſinks of ſin, and nurſeries of vice, common Ale-houſes, and to have the uſing that way and manner reputed amongſt ſuch horrid crimes as by the ſaid Ordinance 'tis reputed, and to be adjudged ſo ſcandalous, as that they who uſe it ought to be deemed and cenſured as unfit & unworthy to officiate in the Church; and for that cauſe alone to be ejected and diſplaced: It will thereupon eaſily be inferred and concluded, that the Church of *England* (the acknowledged Bulwark and Fortreſſe, as well as aſyle and refuge of all the Proteſtants in Chriſtendome) hath hitherto foully and groſly, yea, criminouſly and ſcandalouſly erred in two main Fundaméntals of Religion, and diſcriminating notes of a true Church, *viz.* the true worſhipping of God, and the right and lawful adminiſtration of the Sacraments. And whether the granting or ſuppoſing this, be not very injurious and prejudicial to the true Reformed Proteſtant Religion it ſelf, and highly diſhonourable both to it and to the true Profeſſors thereof, &c. as is before al-

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ledged, is humbly submitted to your Judgements.

Secondly, for the vindicating of the true Reformed Protestant Religion, and the professors thereof, from this foul, but most unjust scandal and aspersion, and from the injury, prejudice and dammage, that it and they may suffer thereby; Your humble Petitioner further prayeth, that his Highnesse the Lord Protector, may be so fairly and observantly treated with, and advised by your Honours, his now greatest Council, concerning that particular, that without the least reflection of diminution upon his Honour and Wisdome, (so far as is possible) his own opinion, or rather sudden conception upon others suggestions, concerning the Book of *Common-Prayer*, may bee taken off, & changed into better thoughts; and so the honour of that Book (so far at least, as concerns the honour of God, himself, and the true Reformed Protestant Religion) be preserved, which is no more then the Apostles themselves did in the abolishing of Jewish Rites and Ceremonies, how inconsistent soever with the Christian Profession

feſſion, and practiſe, and may much more be indulged to the reverend and religious worſhip of many thouſands and ten thouſands eminently renowned Chriſtians.

And for the ſame ends, your Petitioner in the third place, offereth to your Honors this humble motion and earneſt ſupplication, That you would be pleaſed (with the conſent of his Highneſſe firſt obtained) to publiſh a decree or command, That all perſons of what religion or profeſſion ſoever, that have ought to object or except againſt ſet forms of publique Prayer, and adminiſtration of the Sacraments in general, or againſt the Book of *Common-Prayer* in particular, do (by ſome few of their own religion and profeſſion, choſen by them for that purpoſe, for the avoidng of tumults and confuſion) within ſuch a time give in to your Honours, either written or printed, all or the chief of the reaſons & grounds of thoſe their objections and exceptions. And that your Petitioner, (though very weak and unworthy to appear in ſo great a cauſe) together with ſome few other of thoſe many that are of his judgement, may, upon ſufficient

cient notice thereof given to them, and some small charges, by reason of his and their known poverty, allowed them, be admitted to return answer to those objections and exceptions; and then have some further time assigned them to clear and make good to his Highnesse and to your Honours, these three Assertions.

I. That Set Forms of publique Prayer, and dispensing of the Saeraments, are more agreeable to and consistent with the precepts and rules of Prayer, and dispensing the Sacraments contained in sacred Scripture, then *ex tempore* Prayers and Arbitrary modes of dispensing these Ordinances are.

II. That it is requisite and necessary for every settled Church in every Nation to have (as anciently and lately they had) known Set-Forms both of publique Prayers, and of publique dispensation of the Sacraments, that so errors in both may be the better avoided, and the uncharitable judging of each other prevented, and peace and truth preserved.

III. That the Book of *Common-Prayer*, and administration of the Sacraments formerly

merly eſtabliſhed and uſed here in *England*, is abſolutely the beſt Form and freeſt from all juſt exceptions in all eſſentiall points and practiſes of Religion, that ever yet ſaw light in the Chriſtian world, and none of the weakeſt Forts, that the Church of *England* had againſt Popery, and other errors, and hereſies. And therefore may by your Honours mediation to his Highneſſe, and with his and your joint approbation and confirmation, be ſtill continued in this Church (at leaſt in thoſe Congregations that ſhall accept and deſire it) without the ſcandal of any, or prejudice to thoſe that ſhall uſe it.

And for this your juſtice, and zeal for the honour of God, and the true Reformed Proteſtant Religion, your Petitioner with many thouſands ſhall faithfully and devoutly pray, &c.

faithfully and devoutly pray, &c.

CERTAIN

QUAERIES

Concerning the Ordinance *for ejecting of Scandalous, Ignorant, and Insufficient* Ministers *and* Schoolmasters.

Humbly presented to the Highest Court of PARLIAMENT now convened at *Westminster.*

By L.G. B.D.

Quar. 1.

WHether the Ordinance it self be not contrary to the known Lawes, and other just claims of the Subjects of this Nation, (as *Magna Charta* and the Petition of Right) for the preservation of themselves, their rights, and proprieties: For that by them (as we are informed) no Subject ought or can be ejected out of his possession or lively-hood, unlesse such an ejection, or dispossession be first legally procured by vertue

and power of ſome eſtabliſhed Law or Act of Parliament, conſtituted and conſented unto by the Supreme Governour, and the repreſentative of the Subjects, the Parliament.

Quar. 2.

Whether, if an Ordinance made by the Protector and his Councill, for the ejecting of Miniſters out of their Livings and and lively-hoods, be owned ſince ſubmitted unto, as authority ſufficient for the ſo doing, The late King and his Councill be not thereby ſuperabundantly juſtified againſt all thoſe late Complaints of the pretended illegallities of their Acts, decrees or orders made by them at the Council board, in far inferiour caſes to this of poſſeſsion and lively-hood, and inſtanced in by the late Parliament, as grand grievances of the Subjects, and an introduction of arbitrary power, at leaſt an endeavouring to bring *Weſtminſter Hall* to *Whitehall*.

Quar. 3.

Whether by the ſame authority, an Ordinance may not be made, for the ejecting or ſequeſtring of any other Subjects of England, (even the Commiſsioners, authorized by this Ordinance themſelves, as well as any) that ſhall, by other Commiſsioners nominated for that purpoſe, be found guilty of ſome of the ſame, or of any other crimes, that by ſuch an Ordinance ſhall be reputed crimes.

Quar. 4.

Whether the ſame Powers that made this Ordinance, when they have judged ſuch and ſuch crimes in Miniſters to deſerve the ejection of thoſe that are guilty

guilty of them out of their Lively-hoods, ought not in equity and conſcience as in a true ſincere deteſtation of thoſe ſinnes, in whomſoever they finde them, to conſtitute and appoint alſo ſome Commiſsioners in each County to cenſure ſeverely and puniſh ſharply all the ſame, much more far greater crimes in others, beſides Miniſters. For ſurely, though the ſame crimes be greater, when found in Miniſters, then in others: yet ſinnes of that high nature, as to deſerve to be puniſhed with no leſſe then ejection, when found in Miniſters, cannot but be ſo great in themſelves, as to deſerve ſome proportionable puniſhment, when they are found in others, eſpecially in magiſtrates, and men of place and authority.

Quar. 5.

Whether the Lord Protector's Succeſſour may not with as much equity make another Ordinance for the ejecting of all thoſe, both Clergy and Lay-men, out of their eſtates and livelyhoods, who have been active in this Commiſsion of ejecting Miniſters, or otherwiſe guilty of any other crimes, which ſhall by him and his Councill be judged crimes and worthy of ejection? And whether this preſent Ordinance may not prove an unhappy preſident to that purpoſe, not to be ſpoken or whiſpered againſt by any that ſubmits to this.

Quar. 6.

Whether his Highneſſe, by imparting ſo much power to any five Commiſſioners in every County, as is by this Ordinance impatted, without admitting of any appeal from their Judgement either to himſelf, or to his Councel, or to his Judges of Aſsiſes, or to any

of his Courts in Westminster, may not thereby, ere he is aware have all or the most of the Livings and Cures in in every County, voyded and emptied of such Ministers, as are at the least contented to submit to his Government, and to live quietly and patiently under it, without attempting ought against him or it, And instead of such, to have them filled again with such Pro-ministers, as will neither be contented with his government, nor with any other? And what consequents or effects may soon follow thereupon in this factious and divided Nation, wherein (besides Jesuitick Papists, who are enemies to all Governours, but those of their own leaven) such multitudes of Anabaptists, Quakers, and other Hereticks, that are enemies to all Government, are lately crept up to a considerable strength, may be too soon felt, and to late thought on. His Highnesse cannot but remember, what a dangerous designe it was not long since thought by wise men, for some Commissioners to have power to buy in Impropriations, and to recommend Ministers to them, or to inlarge their Livings by them, (though admitted by Bishops) only, for that it was conceived that those Commissioners would thereby obliege the Ministers in such cures too much to them.

Quer. 7.

Whether in all penall Acts or Ordinances for the punishment of any Crimes or offences, it hath not been the constant practice of the Law-givers of this Nation, and so ought in Conscience ever to be. That no such Act or Ordinance should commence or begin to be of any force, till there had been first some fair warning given

given to all the Subjects of the Nation, to beware for the future, after such or such a time, of committing such or such a crime or offence: And for that cause, the tenour of such penall Lawes did constantly runne in these or the like termes. Be it enacted and constituted, &c. That if any man shall, after such a day in such a year, do thus or thus, then he shall suffer so and so: In Gods own account (who hates sin with an infinite hatred, above what any man can do) where there is no Law, there is no transgression, for sin is a transgression of the Law, and where there is no transgression there ought to be no punishment: and although the transgressing of Gods Law by any crime or offence, be a fault meriting punishmẽt from that Power, which is ordained by God to be a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, yet 'tis worth the questioning, whether any such Power may or ought to punish any transgression of Gods Law with any punishment, till he have given the people under his power warning thereof. and then too, 'tis much more disputable, whether he may, by any Law, punish any transgression of Gods Law with any punishment, that God hath not prescribed in his Law, before he have given them warning of such a punishment, or rather it is not to be questioned at all, it being clear that he ought not, there being no Law of God or man, that can in equity be of any force to punish till it be a Law, and therefore may not punish for what was done before it had a being with a punishment, to which it self onely gave the force of being a punishment to that offence or transgression.

Quar. 8.

Whether the making of an Ordinance by any Power for the punishment of crimes committed before that Ordinance was made, and that where no such penalty was ever before by any Law in force inflicted, Be not a rendring of every Subject unsecure in his estate, body and life it self, be he never so obedient to all Laws, and punctually carefull to observe them; When as, for ought any man knowes, that which he did, sometime since, or now doeth, and had then, and hath now, no penalty at all inflicted upon the doing it, or but a light one, may, within a little time after, be reputed and adjudged by the supream power a crime worthy of the forfeiture of his estate, or the imprisonment or other torture or torment of his body, or the losse of his life it self, and accordingly he may suffer either in one or all of them.

Quar. 9.

Whether the Commissioners appointed by the Ordinance to hear and determine concerning the ejection of Ministers and the charges and accusations brought against them, Be such as in Law and right reason ought to be authorized for that purpose.

First, because they are all secular or Lay-men; (for the clergy Commissioners that are nominated are but Cyphers, and have no power by the Ordinance to meddle in any thing, save in the inquiring and judging in part who are ignorant and insufficient.) For although we Ministers of the Reformed Religion of the Church of England do acknowledge our selves

ſelves ſubject to the ſecular power, yet we have ever, till theſe times of our deep ſufferings, had ſo much Priviledge and immunity granted us by our Religious Princes and Parliaments, as that we have perpetually had our Eccleſiaſticall Judges to heare and determine all, or the moſt Eccleſiaſticall cauſes and affaires as weas our temporall Judges in all civil. And when wel were judged by temporal Judges, they were ſuch learned and approved prudent and upright men, or at leaſt thought to be ſuch, when they were choſen to that weighty and honourable imployment, as that they were intruſted with hearing and determining all matters of Civile Judicature throughout the whole Realme, and leaſt intereſted in thoſe ſeverall Counties and Circuits wherein they were aſſigned Judges.

Secondly, becauſe they are, many of them, ſuch Lay-men, as have abundantly declared themſelves very great diſlikers of, if not enemies to thoſe Clergy men of whom they are made Judges; and ſome of them have given too much occaſion to be reputed Antiminiſters, and ſuch as doe not either love or allow the very office and function of Miniſters.

Thirdly, becauſe ſome of them, and they of the Beſt rank from whom Miniſters might hope and expect to receive the moſt juſtice and legall favour, may be feared to be put into Commiſſion, not ſo much for acting there in themſelves, or to reſtrain and moderate others over-activeneſſe and violence, as for the countenancing thoſe other Commiſſioners that are moſt inferiour, and known to be very active and vio-

violent againſt Miniſters. For that ſome of them are made Commiſſioners, whoſe places and offices require their conſtant attendance on his Highneſſe, or nere him in ſome of his Courts at Weſtminſter: And others are made Commiſſioners for ſeverall Counties, in all which t'is impoſſible for them to exerciſe that power, or but very ſeldome. And ſome alſo of thoſe Commiſſioners in ſome Counties, if not in the moſt, will be very unwilling to act in ſuch an imployment, being yoaked with ſuch inferiour and otherwiſe generally diſtaſted coaſſeſſors, as they know ſome of them to be. And ſo for theſe and ſome other reaſons, the whole power and authority, at leaſt the principall if not the ſole exerciſe thereof, for the ejecting of Miniſters will be devolved into the hands of ſome few in every County, whoſe juſtice and moderation, the beſt of Miniſters have reaſon to ſuſpect.

Fourthly, becauſe too many of ſuch a numerous Synedrion of Commiſſioners may have children, kindred, or friends, whoſe want of a Living, or deſire of a better, may too much byas thoſe Commiſſioners in their Judgements, eſpecially againſt ſuch Miniſters as have good Livings.

Fifthly, becauſe divers of thoſe reputed ſcandalous crimes, whereof thoſe Commiſſioners are to judge, are not properly within their Cognizance, nor indeed within the ſphere of many of their underſtandings. As what is curſing and ſwearing, properly ſo termed, and what is not, what is Drunkenneſſe rightly ſo called, and what is not; what is a prophanation of the

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Lords day, and what is not, what is the true profeſſion of Religion and godlineſſe, and what is not, and who are the ſtrict profeſſors thereof and who are not, what it is to ſcoffe at or revile the profeſſion of Religion or the ſtrict Profeſſors thereof, and what is not, what are ſuch licentious practiſes (beſides Whitſon-Ales, Wakes, Morris Dances, May-poles, and Stage-playes) as do incourage men in a looſe and prophane converſation, and what are not. For often experience tells us, that ſome account bare aſſertions ſo and ſo framed to be oathes, and others think thoſe that are oathes to be none: ſome repute the drinking more than quencheth thirſt to be drunkenneſſe, (and here in Norfolke hath been already oath made by a man of no inferiour quality, that a Miniſter was drunk, becauſe he ſmelt of drink, and his tongue did falter: by which t'is clear that he neither knew what it is to be drunk, nor what it is to ſwear one ſo to be) and others ſay a man is not drunk, till he be wholly deprived by his exceſſive drinking of his reaſon and underſtanding in the uſe and exerciſe of it: and the moſt learned Judges in the Law have differed very much in their Judgements about it, as well as the Caſuiſts in Divinity. And for the prophanation of the Lords Day, Some, and they not a few have accounted the dreſſing of any meat, or the doing of any other ordinary work, or the uſing any common talk on that Day, to be a prophanation of the Day: Others, that would not like it well to be thought prophane, have to their power maintained both by their practiſe and otherwiſe, that the working on their trades, or the

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buying and ſelling in publick markets on that Day (eſpecially if it be not in the hour) of publick prayer and preaching) is no prophanation of the Day. But for the ſcoffing at, or reviling the ſtrict profeſſion or profeſſors of Religion or Godlineſſe. There are ſo many ſeverall factions, that claim the profeſſion of Religion and Godlineſſe to themſelves, and to thoſe only of their faction, that the true Reformed Proteſtant Religion (which is the moſt ſound, ſincere, true Religion in the world) is by them not vouchſafed the name of Religion, but made the ſcorn and contempt of them and theirs; and the true profeſſors thereof are become the chiefly perſecuted men of the times. So that now, if any zealous Elijah ſhall but uſe any holy Sarcaſme againſt any one of theſe numerous factions, much more reprove any of them for their folly and frenzy, he may be accounted by ſome of his Judges a ſcoffer at, or a reviler of the ſtrict profeſſion, or profeſſors of Religion or Godlineſſe, as we in this County have already a ſufficient example thereof, where a very grave, prudent, conſcientious Miniſter (as he is generally voyced) hath been convented for ſcoffing at the profeſſors of Religion, becauſe he ſpake againſt hypocrites, underſtanding by them (as the witneſſe upon oath ſaid he believed,) the Godly and religious. Then for other licentious practiſes, beſides Whitſon-Ales, Wakes &c. by which men are incouraged in a looſe and prophane converſation, They may (for ought is known to the contrary) be extended and interpreted by ſome five Commiſſioners, as comprehending all games, ſports or recreations of

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youth, how innocent soever: And that Minister that will not joyn with or assist some indiscreet ignorant Sectaries in their interdicting or disturbing the youth of his Parish, in any such game, sport, or recreation (though he can or do alledge more reasons for it, then they or any of their sect can answer) may be judged an incourager or countenancer of men in loose and prophane conversation.

Sixthly, because it is as irregular and improper (if not more) for Lay-men to be Commissioners in Ecclesiasticall causes and affairs, as for Clergy-men to be commissioners in Civil. And it may, without any derogation to any on the one part, or ostentation of any on the other, be very well presumed, that there may be found in every County divers Clergy-men every way as fit and able to be Commissioners of peace, as many Lay-men named in the Ordinance, are to be Commissioners in the present Commission.

Quar. 10.

Whether the joyning of so many Ministers with the Lay-Commissioners, and giving them no authority at all to act, unlesse it be in declaring and adjudging in part, who are ignorant and insufficient (which is as nothing, such Ministers being more secure then the most knowing and able; unlesse we could imagine, that some of the Clergy-Commissioners themselves will be brought to the test and tryall) Does not, even by that, as well as by other mediums, apparently discover to all seeing-eyes, that the design of those, that first suggested this Ordinance to his

Highneſſe, is utterly to ruine and extirpate the whole Proteſtant Miniſtry of England, the long laboured deſign of the Jeſuits, but never ſo much to be feared as now. And for the full accompliſhment thereof with the more ſecurity of *Miniſters* and the leſſe ſuſpicion of others that love them; they thought it requiſite to have ſo many *Miniſters* in each County named in the Ordinance as Commiſſioners, that ſo it might be preſumed, that ſeing there were ſo many *Miniſters* in Commiſſion, they would not ſuffer any of their own tribe or calling to be ejected, but ſuch as highly deſerved it, and of whom there ſhould be little or no hope of reclaiming. But then thoſe Miniſters ſo nominated muſt have no power at all allowed them, more then to tickle them, and blinde others, with the empty title of Commiſſioners, (though they had known too many of them to have been active enough formerly in the ruining of others of their Brethren) for feat leaſt ſome even of thoſe active ones, having ſeen the ſad effect of that their former activeneſſe, and had ſome remorſe of conſcience for it; (which is my conſtant prayer, that they may have, if they have not) and being thereupon become of more bowels and compaſſion towards the reſt of their Brethren, as well as more ſenſible of their own approaching ruine (for they that perſecute *Miniſters*, though it be at the firſt by the aſſiſtance of *Miniſters*, will not willingly leave any *Miniſters* unperſecuted, no not thoſe, that have ſo aſſiſted them) ſhould now begin to conſider better what they doe; and not conſent or yield, that any *Miniſter* of any good-

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neſſe and worth (though unhappily guilty of too many infirmities, as who is not ?) ſhould be ejected or diſplaced, and ſo undone and ruined, whom they could deliver from the malice and power of their perſecutors, the perfect haters of all Miniſters.

Quer. II.

Whether the carefull joyning of five Commiſsioners of the Laitie, at the leaſt, with five or more Commiſſioners of the Clergy, in the caſe of ignorance, and inſufficiency, (the onely caſe wherein the Commiſſioners of the Clergy, have ought to do) or rather the giving of the five Comiſſioners of the Laitie the chief power in that caſe alſo, and making the Clergie Commiſsioners onely their aſsiſtants therein, may not be ſuſpected to have been contrived in favour to thoſe juſtly ignorant, inſufficient Mechanicks and other illiterate Laicks, that have lately either crept in or been thruſt into ſeverall Livings or cures of Souls, and for the preſerving them from Being ejected for their groſſe ignorance and inſufficiency. For otherwiſe, if whomſoever the Clergy Commiſsioners, though five, or ten, or more, ſhould judge to be ignorant and inſufficient, ought to be reputed ſo upon their ſo judging, it might have been feared, that the moſt of thoſe Idol Shepherds muſt have returned to their old trades again; and many more, that are gaping for other Miniſters Livings, would not adventure the ſo filling their unhallowed mouthes, leaſt an after examination ſhould force them to throw them up again, ere they had well ſwallowed them:

And so the people of such Parishes should murmu
and complaine for want of Ministers, or some
things instead of them. Whereas now, if any such
should be judged never so ignorant and insufficient by
the Clergy-Commissioners, they have not much cause
to fear, but that their brethren of the Laity, being
some as ignorant as themselves, will be more favou-
rable to them, and preserve them from ejection rather
then any, as being fittest to converse and comply with
them, or to be servants and slaves to them, without
any gainsaying or contradicting whatsoever they say
or do.

Quar. 12.

Whether it be not against both the Lawes of God
and man, that the Oath of one witnesse with other
concurrent evidence of the charge &c. (as is by this
Ordinance constituted) should be received as a suffici-
ent testimony for the ejecting of a Minister out of his
Living or Cure of souls? whereas an accusation ought
not to be received against an Elder, under two or three
witnesses. 1 *Timoth*, 5. 19. And one witnesse is by
Gods expresse command forbidden to rise up a-
gainst any man, for any iniquity or for any sin, or but
at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three
witnesses the matter is to be established. *Deut.* 19. 15.

Quar. 13.

Whether that Law of God recorded, *Deut.* 19.
from *ver.* 16. to the end, (namely, That if a false
witnesse did rise up against any man to testifie
against him that which is wrong, and the Judges
upon inquisition (which they by that Law were
bound

bound to make) did find that the witneſſe was a falſe witneſſe, and had teſtified falſely againſt his brother; They ſhould then do to him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. And ſo (not otherwiſe) they ſhould put away evill from among them, &c.) cloſe not in the equity of it, if not in the very precept, (as farre as it may poſsibly be obſerved) oblige us Chriſtians to this day: And whether that Law ought not to be more eſpecially obſerved and put in execution in caſe of a falſe witneſſe riſing up againſt a Miniſter; and above all, in this particular caſe; wherein the teſtimony of one witneſſe is to be received againſt a Miniſter, for the ejecting him out of his Living. For if a falſe witneſſe were ſo to be puniſhed, when the teſtimony of one falſe witneſſe could do no manyany hurt, unleſs another or two more did conſpire with him in the ſame teſtimony much more then now in this caſe, when the teſtimony of one ſuch witneſſe may ruine a man. And if a falſe witneſſe, of what ranck ſoever he were, was to be ſo ſeverely dealt with, when he roſe up againſt any man, though never ſo much inferiour to him, and teſtified falſely aganſt him; though perhaps only that man, againſt whom he ſo teſtified, were injured thereby, or ſome few others; How much more then ſhould the extremity of that puniſhment be inflicted now; when any baſe inferiour fellow may, by riſing up and bearing falſe witneſſe againſt a Miniſter of the Goſpell, utterly ruine, not onely that Miniſter, but his whole Family, and do no ſmall wrong to his whole Pariſh or cure of ſouls, and to the ſouls of many others beſides.

Quær. 14.

Whether, If the testimony of any one man, with somewhat else, which five Commissioners shall judge to be concurrent evidence, be sufficient to eject any Minister, It may not be evidently and visibly foreseen; That now such a door of hope to ruine Ministers is opened, and such an easie way chalked out for the accomplishing it, there will suddenly be very few ministers left in England to exercise their ministery; especially considering the professed distaste and hatred that hath of late been openly proclaimed and publish-ed by severall numerous factions, and hereticall and schismaticall combinations, against the ordination, order, office, and settled maintainance of Ministers, As, that all that have been ordained by Bishops, are Antichristian; That the orders and degrees of Ministers, and the power and authority, that they pretend to have over others of their Brethren the people of God, is a mere usurpation: That their office and function is needlesse and superfluous; And, which hath the most abettors, That their Tithes and settled maintainance, which God and the Lawes have given and confirmed to them, are Jewish, Popish, and unjust.

Quæ. 15.

Whether, if such testimony, and such concurrence of Evidence, as was instanced in by the last Quære, be sufficient to eject any Minister, either a mans own Minister, or any other, The most pious, orthodox, laborious, conscienscious Ministers, that are, which do most stoutly oppose Hereticks and Schis-

Schismaticks, most severely reprove sin, most powerfully incite to holinesse, and most religiously conforme their own lives to their doctrines, be not therefore (considering the Devills and wicked mens malice against such) more subject to have some criminous accusation or other brought against them, then other Ministers, that are more obnoxious themselves, but withall lesse earnest against the vices of others? And so whether this Ordinance which is pretended to be constituted for the more effectuall propagating the Gospell and the settlement of a painfull Ministery in this Nation, will not in probability, prove a grand hinderance of the liberty of the Gospell, and a strong temptation to the Ministers thereof, to forbear their crying aloud, and not sparing to tell the people their sins and their transgressions, and to choose rather to preach only smooth things unto them, that may humour and please them, And so both Ministers and people to perish together in their iniquity.

Quer. 16

Whether that clause, To proceed to the examination of witnesses upon Oath (if the cause require) as well for and on the behalf of the person accused &c. as for proof of the said Charge, Articles &c. Does not leave it to five Commissioners will and pleasure, whether they shall think it fit to examine any witnesses, either on the *Ministers*, or on the accusers part, upon oath, or no. And if so; whether such an arbitrary, unlimited power and Commission was ever granted by any Christian to be exercised over Christians, or by any sober Heathen, over Heathen or Christians.

Quer. 17.

Whether that close couched proviso, of allowing all necessary charges incident to the ejecting, sequestring, or removing of *Ministers*, Be not too great an incouragement, as well as temptation, to the enemies and adversaries of those of that sacred function, to rise up against them, and to appear either accusers of them, or witnesses of such accusations, how unjust soever? When our Saviour Christ, in sending forth his disciples did forewarn and forearm them, and in them all other dispensers of his Gospell, against revilings, persecutions, and false accusations, amongst other arguments that he used, he told them, that so the world persecuted the Prophets, so that, his Prophets, his Apostles, his *Ministers*, in all Ages, have been and shall be reviled, persecuted, and falsly accused; And needs must they be so in this age above other, if a reward be allowed them that shall do it, and they, who should keep off the *Ministers* (as much as in them lieth) from being so injuriously charged, shall allow them their Charges, that deal so with them. The *Ministers* of the Gospell are sent forth, as Lambes into the midst of Wolves: and if those shepherds of the people, that should defend those Lambes from such Wolves, shall allow such wolves some of those Lambes bloods for worrying them; 'tis the infinite mercy and providence of that great Shepherd, that all those his Lambes are not devoured; for 'tis not their serpentine wisdome, nor done like innocency that can protect them.

Quer. 18.

Whether if we consider the proneneſſe of man in generall

generall both to ſwear and ſwear falſely, when it may either ſatisfy their malice, or otherwiſe conduce to the obtaining their baſe ends; as alſo the great and horrid violation of oaths and covenants, that this our Nation in particular is guilty of; together with the deſperate Atheiſme, and damnable practice of common ſwearing, that abounds in all parts thereof; and all theſe added to the other arguments before hinted, It be not much to be feared, That this ordinance for the ejecting of Miniſters for perjury and ſubordination of perjury, will, by its admitting of ſuch witneſſes againſt Miniſters, as it admits and incourages, inſtead of finding and puniſhing one Miniſter guilty of thoſe abominable crimes, occaſion many hundreds, yea thouſands of other men, whoſe ſouls ought to be more regarded, wittingly and frequently to run into thoſe ſouldeſtroying abominations? And who ſhall anſwer for them?

Quer. 19.

Whether, all thoſe things deemed and reputed by this Ordinance to be crimes, and ſuch crimes as are ſo ſcandalous, that every *Miniſter*, that is guilty thereof, muſt be ejected, be any crimes at all, or ſo much as ſins, or not. As firſt, thoſe often diſputed and diverſly determined games of Cards and Dice; provided that they be onely for recreation, and for no wager or ſponſion, or for no other, then what is neither prejudiciall to the looſer in his eſtate, nor detrimentall to any that he is bound to provide for, and that there be no provoking of either gameſter to intemperancy of language or diſturbance of paſſion, Secondly, that long continued, univerſally approved, and often ſubſcri-

bed to uſe of the Common prayer book of which I have elſewhere in my Petition to the Parliament, humbly declared my Judgement, and for the vindicating whereof, I ſhall willingly undertake what ſhall be required of me.

Quar. 20.

Whether thoſe crimes which are juſtly ſo reputed, but are already puniſhable by other Laws, or by ſuch Acts, as are for the preſent reputed Laws, with very much ſeverity (as amongſt other named or refetred to by the Ordinance, that crime of Adultery, which is by a late Act to be puniſhed with death, as well in Miniſters as in others) have not a ſufficient puniſhment already ſet or provided for the Committers of them, before this Ordinance of ejection came forth?

Quar. 21.

Whether the making Adultery in a *Miniſter* to be puniſhed with ejection ſhall free him from ſuffering the other puniſhment of death inflicted by a former Act: or muſt a Miniſter be puniſhed with both: or, becauſe the Act for puniſhing Adultery with death was ſo cautelouſly and warily framed with ſuch reſtrictions and proviſo's, as that 'tis a queſtion, whether it will make men more fearfull or more ſecure in the commiting it, by reaſon of the extreme difficulties of proving any guilty of it ſo as that Act requires: As there was good reaſon it ſhould, becauſe it concerned the lives of men, and thoſe eſpecially, men of other rancks and degrees, and of other Callings and Profeſſions, more then *Miniſters*. And therefore there muſt be ſome other courſe taken for the finding Miniſters guilty of Adultery with much more eaſe and facility; or elſe it would

would be in vain to mention that crime. And to that purpose it is by this Ordinance constituted, That if but one witnesse, whosoever he be, will but swear that any Minister did commit Adultery, and something else be produced that five commissioners shall judge to be concurrent evidence, the poor Minister must be reputed guilty of Adultery and so ejected. But then from hence ariseth another small question, whether such a Minister that is so judged to be guilty of Adultery, be indeed guilty or not? For if he be not, why is he ejected? And if he be, why is his life spared? Or why may not the Act take away, what the Ordinance leavs him? And so indeed the poor Ministers themselves may be speedily provided for, when they are so ejected though their wives and children may starve out a while upon some poor pittance, that the Commissioners shall perhaps allow them, though there be no provision made for them in case of their husbands or fathers deaths.

Quer. 22

Whether the Committing any one of those crimes, truly so adjudged by the Ordinance, some years before; and after true unfeigned repentance since the Committing it, so that the Person guilty of that crime hath not only the guilt pardoned by God, but Gods promise also, that it shall not be mentioned unto him, Ought notwithstanding to be punished with ejection of the same person out of all his Livelyhood.

Quer. 23

Whether the being guilty of any one or more of these crimes be a ground sufficient to deprive a Minister of exercising his Ministeriall function and those

abilities which God hath given him, and which he is bound to exercise, with no lesse then a dreadfull woe denounced against him, if he do not. And upon whom shall that woe light, if the *Minister* be forcibly debarred or hindred from the exercise of them?

Quar. 24

Whether a *Minister*, guilty of one or more of these crimes, may not (notwithstanding his guiltines thereof) do God good service by his preaching and dispensing the Sacrament to those that are willing and desirous, for all that, to partake of those Ordinances dispensed by him. Or whether the virtue and efficacy of those ordinances do so depend upon the goodnesse and badnesse of the dispensers thereof, as to be efficacious or not efficacious, according as the dispensers are Godly or wicked?

Quar. 25.

Whether, If a Minister be guilty of one or more of those crimes, he ought not first to be told thereof, and gently and meekly admonished by some or other in private, without discovering such a father's nakednesse to others: And if he fall into the same Sin or sins again, then to be admonished thereof before others: And if he then amend not, to be severely corrected and chastised by some in publick authority, before he be quite cut off and rejected from the exercising his function for ever? And what grounds are there in sacred writ for such an ejection of Ministers, as the Ordinance adjudgeth?

Quar. 26.

Whether there are not in some Ministers other crimes

crimes of as high a nature and as deep guilt, as divers of those named in the Ordinance, and as much, if not more prejudiciall to the Glory of God, and to the benefit of those people that are committed to their charge, that are left unpunished by that Ordinance: As Pride, Covetousnesse, malice, false-accusation of brethren, treachery, Apostasie from the truth, Heresie, instability of doctrine, being of one opinion one day, and condemning all that are not of the same, and deserting that opinion the next day if the wind turn, the having mens persons in admiration because of advantage, the running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, the partaking in the gainsaying of Core, the prophesying or preaching lies, the neglect, if not contempt of Gods ordinances, especially the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, the violation of oathes and covenants &c. And whether those that are Judges of others should not doe better first to Judge themselves.

Quar, 27.

Whether that clause of the Ordinance which adjudgeth such Ministers to be ejected as have, or shall declare their disaffection to the present Government without excepting any, no not those that either have changed, or shall hereafter change their thoughts and affections into a better esteem and liking of it, will not, in probability rather confirm those that have been or shall be disaffected in that their disaffection for ever, then induce or perswade any of them to approve of, or comply with that Government, being excluded from all favour or mercy if they doe, having been once guilty of disaffection towards it.

Quar.

Quar. 29.

Whether the omitting of publick Catechising on the Lords day for many years together, and the neglecting to administer the holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper for as many are not crimes of an higher nature, and more meriting the ejection of those Ministers, that are guilty of them, then the omitting for one Lords Day or two or ten, the publick praying or preaching on that day. Whenas publick Catechising hath been acknowledged by our adversaries to have been the prime way of instruction, wherein we of the Reformed Religion have so much out-stript them, and gotten so much ground of them. And the often celebrating of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is our only way of commemorating Christ's death and passion, that Christ himself hath prescribed us, and the prime means of sealing and assuring to us all the benefit thereof, even whatsoever Christ hath in his Gospel promised.

Quar. 30.

Whether the act expressing how often omission of publick praying and preaching upon the Lords Day, either in a year, or in a mans life time, shall be reputed such negligence as that the Minister guilty thereof shall be ejected, as also how long absence from his cure, and at what distance, shall be accounted non Residence, Does not expose all Ministers to strange and inavoidable hazzards of loosing their Livings or cures, according as five severall Commissioners, shall, at severall times, upon severall occasions, in their severall judgements alterable every day, please to determine?

Quar. 31

Quar. 31.

Whether it had not been requisite and necessary, for the preventing of malice and revenge in the party or parties accusing, and for the preserving of innocency and uprightness in the party accused, and for the avoiding of perjury and subornation of perjury in the Witnesses on the behalf of both, as also for the clearing and justifying of the proceedings and determinations of the commissioners and the through satisfaction of their consciences therein, That there should have been some time limited and prescribed for every accuser of any Minister, concerning any of the crimes mentioned or referred to in the Ordinance to bring in his charge or accusation into the open court of the Commissioners, and then to present it to them, which in so many dayes or weeks after any of those crimes, whereof he accuseth him, were committed; or else that his charge or accusation should not be received or reputed of any validity.

Quar. 32.

Whether upon the rendering of Ministers thus liable to whatsoever men and devils can in the height of malice and depth of conspiracy contrive or conspire against them, All sober and discreet men will not avoid the breeding up their children for that holy calling, which is of it self so perilous to the most able and faithfull, and is now, by this Ordinance exposed to so much scorn, and contempt, and persecution by all the enemies thereof. And so the Ministery of England must needs be soon worne out that way, and the people be left without any Shepherd or have only blind guides, and those of the lowest of the people to go in and out before them.

Quar. 33.

Whether, upon the ejection of so many Ministers, as 'tis visible will be ejected by this Ordinance, There will not be very many poor souls, even whole congregations of them, in all parts of this Nation, suddenly left destitute of any Pastor or Teacher to feed and instruct them; or else one Pastor or Teacher must be interested with a tot quot of cures, as some, not fit to officiate in any cure (witnesse that there was vanity and iniquity of boasting that they should have so many) have already bragged that they shall ere long have five or six a piece. And besides 'tis to be feared (or rather it cannot be avoided) That notorious Heretiques, close Romanists, and mad Mechanicks will creep into cures of soules, as well as into pulpits in a multitude of Parishes, as they have done already in some, and so devour many poor souls for whom Christ shed his blood. For what shall keep such out: when if they have but so much impudency and hypocrisie, as to tell two or three holy lies of the same and manner of their conversion (though they never were so wicked then when they so belyed God and themselves, by faigning themselves to have been so converted from their wickednesse) and then whine or snivel three or four time-serving principles, and answer, or admire at, four or five strange mungrel questions, which some of the propounders themselves understood not, and those that have any ingenuity amongst them can scarce forbear laughing at & for the palliating their ignorance disclaime human learning as savouring too much of the two universities Rome and Babylon; & at the last, If these rare gifts take not with all the Examiners, be but furnished with one good gift

or

or two more in their hands to open some of the others mouths to speak a few good words in private on their behalf, and to say how they are affected and what opinion they are of, though their judgements never so small or weak, (all which any Heretick, Romanist, and illiterate mechanick may easily do) who shall dare to appear against them, unlesse they did hazard the losse of their own Livings for the opposing such that steal men in their stealing into other.

Quær. 34.

Whether the ejecting of so many Ministers by this Ordinance, as are likely to be ejected, if the Ordinance it self be not repealed by his Highnesse with your Honours advice, will not bring a greater scandall upon the Reformed Protestant Religion here in this Nation (and that not without some reflection of dishonour upon other Reformed Churches in other Nations) throughout Christendome and elsewhere, then all those Ministers that shall be ejected thereby, could ever have brought upon it, had they been all really guilty of all the scandalous crimes whereof they are or shall be maliciously and falsely accused.

Quær. 35.

Whether it be not more then probable. That, as since the former ejecting, sequestring or removing, that is, one word depriving (for all or the most cicetions, sequestrations, or removes of Clergy-men, have proved utter deprivations) of so many Ministers by the late Parliament, so many Atheisticall, hereticall, blasphemous and execrable opinions, derogatory to the honour of God and destructive to humane society, have sprung up amongst us, and so many Popish points of doctrine have been maintained and propagated in all parts of this Nation, even by some that do pretend to abhorre the name of Popery, as well as by others. So likewise now, after that so many Ministers more shall be ejected by this Ordinance, The number of the foresaid horrid opinions and dangerous points of Doctrine will be very much augmented and increased

in every Corner, nay in every open ſtreet, beſides many other miſchiefs that will grow apace upon us, that are not yet ſo evidently diſcernable; and of which his Highneſſe himſelf, when it is too late, may be as ſenſible as any other? For they, who thus ſtrike at the Miniſtery, will be as ready and as adventurous upon the leaſt advantage they can find or make, to knock down the Magiſtracy. *Quær.* 36.

Whether, all theſe things conſidered, unleſſe this Ordinance be repealed, the ſtrange proceedings, and unparaleld ſentences of each ſuch Commiſſion-Court in every County, together with the many ſad effects and conſequents, that will undoubtedly follow thereupon, will not very much juſtifie all, even all the exprobitances, illegalities, and cruelties, ſo much complained of and cried out againſt by the late Parliament, both in the High Commiſsion Court of each Province, and in all Eccleſiaſtical Courts in every Dioceſs: and what the ſenſe thereof may in time produce, let the dreadfull iſſues of thoſe former cries againſt thoſe Courts, warn all that may be concerned.

Quær. 37.

Whether, in caſe this Ordinance (notwithſtanding all this) ſhould for the ſins and iniquites both of the Miniſters and People of this Nation be ſtill continued in force: (which the Lord of his mercy forbid, and rather take it into his own hands, then deliver us into the hands of ſuch men) or if any other Commiſſion ſhould be eſtabliſhed by any other Ordinance or Act (if the Lawes already eſtabliſhed have not provided ſufficient puniſhment for ſuch offenders) for the admoniſhing, puniſhing, and (if neither of them will amend them) for the ejecting of ſcandalous, ignorant & inſufficient:

ficient Miniſters & Schoolmaſters which ought to be done, and we pray it may be done (if God ſee it fit and requiſite to be done,) with infinite caution, wiſedome prudence and impartiality, It be not then very neceſſary, That all the allegations, accuſations or charges of all and every of the accuſers and proſecutors of Miniſters, and all the Anſwers and pleas of the ſaid Miniſters in defence of themſelves and their innocency, together with all the teſtimonies and depoſitions of witneſſeſſes on both parts, As alſo all the proceedings, adjudications, or determinations of the Commiſſioners thereupon, with the grounds and reaſons thereof, Be exactly and punctually regiſtred and recorded, and all the particulars thereof, preceding ſentence be openly and diſtinctly read in Court immediately before any ſentence or judgement be paſſed; that all the perſons in their ſeverall relations forenamed & concerned therein, may hear, and be aſſured, whether each particular be, as he or they delivered and underſtood it, or not: and if not, then to have liberty to correct or amend whatſoever he or they were miſtaken or miſunderſtood in. And then, when ſentence is ſo paſſed; That the ſaid Sentence it ſelf and the gronnds thereof be alſo read in open Court, and the Commiſſioners hands that paſſed it, ſet thereto. To the intent, that both the accuſers and proſecutors may be the more wary and juſt in their ſaid allegations, accuſations, or charges, and the Accnſed the more watchfull and diſcreet in their anſwers and pleas, and the witneſſes on both parts the more cautelous aed conſcientious in their teſtimonies and depoſitions, and the Commiſſioners the more circumſpect and impartiall in their ſentences and determinations: as alſo, that all,

That desire to be informed of the full truth of any, or all those transactions, may be the better satisfied; and which is not the least, That his Highnesse, in all complaints or appeales of injustice or grievance, may the more easily and accurately judge thereof.

These Quæries I have laid at your Honours feet, most humbly beseeching you to take them up and to peruse them, onely so long as till, upon thorow examination of them and consultation about them, you shall find whither they may do you, and the distressed Church of God here in England, any service or not in that great and weighty businesse, which is reported to be taken into your care, Namely, the inquiring into the particulars of the Ordinance for the ejecting of Ministers. And if not, that you would lay them there again, and trample on them, and on him that presents them (if he can be more trampled on then he is) for disturbing your more serious consultations with such fruitlesse questions. But yet, if they can no other way serve you or advantage that pious work of yours in searching into the dangerous clauses and desperate consequents of that Minister destroying Ordinance, they may serve to shew my sensibleness of the enemies of the true Reformed Religion's indeavours to bring us all to confusion; as well as my desire to do my utmost to prevent it; And (which I cannot smother) my real compassion and truely Sympathising affection to my poore persecuted brethren of the Ministry: though too many of them (the Lord lay it not their charge) have shown little compassion or affection to me and others of their Brethren when we were elected, His Highnesse who gave life to this ordinance, will not, I hope, think the worse of me for my thus presumptuous medling with it: when I professe solnmely, that I cannot but in Charity believe, that although it had his fiat when it was contrived, yet it had nothing of his contrivement in it, more then that Scandalous, ignorant, and insufficent Ministers and School-masters should be elected: but surely, it was never his intention, that election should be so far extended, and such men impowred to execute it, as that the best of Ministers, yea the whole Ministry of England should be destroyed; or at least made lyable so to be, when the enemies thereof should find their long desired opportunity. No this design certainly came from the Ignatian Conclave, and from

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the Convents of ſome Aritiminiſteriall Heretiques; the former aiming at the ruine of the Reformed Miniſtry of this Nation, the latter at the deſtruction of all Miniſters whatſoever. And ſuch a deſigne, eſpecially when it was covered over with thoſe ſpecious pretences of further Reformation and of the Goſpels propagation, might eaſily eſcape his Highneſſe diſcerning having ſuch a cloud of high concerning affairs incompaſſing him. But if his Highneſſe, who knows me well) ſhould take this ill from me, when I intend him not the leaſt ill by it; He knowes likewiſe, that, as I deſire not to diſpleaſe men by my ſpeaking, ſo I dare not much more diſpleaſe God by my ſilence. And therefore, when the glory of God and the ſafety of his Church is ſo nearly concerned, ſhould my tongue now cleave to my mouth, I ſhould feare, either the being ſtruck quite dumbe here, or the being made to open it in vain cries and unregarded complaints hereafter. And for your Honours, and all others of honour and honeſty, I have cauſe to believe you will the ſooner and the more attend to what I ſay, becauſe many of you know me to be wholly unconcerned and unintereſted, as to mine own particular, in any thing, that this Ordinance takes notice of or openly declares againſt. For the deſires of my ſoul are for a more effectual propagation of the Goſpel, and for the ſettlement of a more painfull Miniſtry: And (to the praiſe and glory of Gods grace be it wholly ſpoken) there are none, no not the worſt of mine enemies, that can charge me with any crime, or ought, that is indeed ſcandalous, or with any of thoſe things which this Ordinance adjudged to be ſcandalous, further then I am able to juſtify both my ſelf and them from giving any juſt occaſion to be ſo adjudged. And (which I am neither aſhamed nor affraid to acknowledge nor may acknowledge without bleſſing God for his calling me and others to beare it patiently & cheerfully) I am one of thoſe deſpiſed ſequeſtred, that is, ejected Miniſters, that were long ſince caſt out of our Livings, not for any ſcandall, ignorance, or negligence, but (which is our glory and comfort) for diſcharging our Loyalty and fidelity to our then Soveraign, and for our love and conſtancy to the eſtabliſhed doctrine and diſcipline of the Church of England, or, (which is their ſhame, I would I could add, ſorrow) for the ſatiſfying of ſome of our covetous, ambitious, malious Brethren's thirſting after our poſſeſſions and lively-hoods. And therefore being neither guilty of any of thoſe living depriving crimes, nor having

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any living to feare the being deprived of, I may be heard the more freely and unsuspectedly in what I plead for others, and those too, many of them, such, as never so much as opened their mouths in the behalf of me or any of my fellow-sufferrers, either in pleading for us when we were to be ejected, or in commiserating our distressed condition since, but either complyed with our enemies, or moved neither tongue nor pen against them. If I had been of their temper, or of some others judgement better then my self, I might with much pretence of reason, and perhaps Religion, not only have forborn to appeare in this cause, but have thought it my duty rather to be silent, and to admire at Gods Justice in this signall progresse of his judgements, in bringing them now upon them, who, if they (did not too many of them) help to bring them upon others, were too silent & insensible, when so many thousands of us first groaned under them, and a multitude perished by them. But I have long since forgiven them and all others, so far as concernes my self; and I beseech the Lord to give them yet, if he have not already, such sense of, and sorrow for, both that and all other their sins, that they may receive comfort and assurance from him of the pardon of them so far as concernes all others, and to grant both to them and to us all, that are of the Ministry, so much grace, that we may speedily and most strictly search and try our own hearts and wayes, and by that search find what those things are whereby we have provoked him to so much wrath and indignation against us, his erst while contemned highly honoured, but now basely continued Dispensers of his Gospel, and upon our finding what those things are, to direct and inable us so to poure out our souls in the humble confessing & unfeigned repenting of them, that we returning to him the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, He may in mercy return to us the despised Shepherds and Bishops of his Sheep, and restore us to our wonted honour and esteem again, (if it be his will) or howsoever to the liberty and happinesse of exercising our function with freedome successe, and comfort, to his Glory, to the benefit of his Church to the comfort of our own souls, and to the conversion, or confusion of his, his Churches and our otherwise implacable, Enemies. Amen, Amen.

FINIS.

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